

Study on the Interaction of Erhu Stage Performance——Taking the Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain as an Example

Huan Zhao*

Shenyang Conservatory of Music, Erhu major, Shenyang, China

Abstract: The interaction of Erhu's performance is a dialectical unity of content and form. Erhu players convey the emotions of the music to the audience through posture, movement, eyesight, rhythm, and timbre. Taking the Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain as an example, this paper analyzes the playing skills and performance strategies in different performance occasions, such as individual concert forms, program recording forms and party live performance forms.

1. Introduction

Erhu is a traditional stringed instrument in China, and its timbre has strong imitation [1] (Fig. 1). Erhu has a history of more than one thousand years since the Tang Dynasty[2]. Its original form was Hu Qin. In modern Chinese National Orchestra, the role of erhu is equivalent to that of violin. Generally, its musical range is measured by octaves and is usually influenced by the quality of the instrument itself as well as the skills of the performer. The lowest note of erhu is middle C group and the range span of a top-quality erhu can reach up to four octaves.

The so-called erhu performance, in fact, refers to a state of interactive performance, while there should be the so-called performance subject and the appreciation object. "The subject refers to those who take part in certain practices to understand and transform the world, while the object refers to the external objective things that constitute the two poles of the activity together with the subject in the objective activity of the subject and has a functional relationship of interaction. It is the object to which the practical and cognitive activities of the subject are directed.[3]" Therefore, as far as erhu's performance is concerned, the subject is the performer and the object is the audience. In this regard, the performer is not playing alone, but in an environment where he or she is performing together with the appreciators. Although in this process, the erhu performer serves as the subject regardless of any type of appreciation objects and actively expresses through the performance of the music, with the initiative to perform. But the relationship between subject and object is not a restrictive object of the overturned subject, "Although on the one hand, the subject actively recognizes, appreciates, utilizes and transforms the object according to its own purpose and plan, by using material, knowledge, and language tools or means; on the other hand, the status and rules of the object itself restrict and limit the activities of the subject[4]". Therefore, during erhu performance,

the object also has a certain influence on the erhu performer. The performer plays erhu for the appreciator, which needs to be completed in a medium, whether it is perceived through audio, offline theatre, or online live video. Both the audience and the performer need to stay in the same media environment, and this environment, as an object, has certain constraints on the performer[5]. Since only one performance state can not respond to all occasions. The performer needs to adjust their performance focus according to the constraints of different occasions. Taking the Erhu concerto, the Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain, as an example, this paper studies the interaction of Erhu's performance on stage and realizes the dialectical unity between playing skills and stage expression. Combined with the author's performance experience, it puts forward relevant strategies to attract the attention of the audience.



Figure 1: Erhu

2. Interactive Stage Performance of Erhu Concerto, the Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain

The author searches for key words: stage performance of Erhu and finds that there are very few papers on the theme of erhu stage performance. The research objects of stage performance are mainly musical drama, drama, and vocal

*Corresponding author: cncz4317@qq.com

music. The author believes that the teaching of traditional Erhu performance relies on timbre, sound quality, and rhythm to convey emotions to the audience. In addition, it is limited by the way of erhu playing. Therefore, few scholars pay attention to other factors affecting erhu performance. Secondly, the author eves the keyword: interactive Erhu performance, but there is no article on interactive Erhu performance. Interaction is a key factor in the stage practice of Erhu's performance. This paper observes many performers' concerts, parties, TV programs, and performance videos. For example, "Feiyang Yangxue Erhu Concert 2018, the Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain", "Fenghua National Music, the Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain, the version of Liu Sijia' Performance", "CCTV Folk Instrumental TV Competition, the Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain, the version of Zhang Yongyin' Performance", and "Central Conservatory of Music Master's Graduation Concert, the Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain". Through observing their performances, the author found that the Erhu players pay attention to every small detail on the stage, such as walking speed, holding posture, expression, and body movements, pay great attention to eye contact with the audience and accompaniment, and attach importance to appearance and curtain call. Through observation and literature, this paper holds that the elements of Erhu's performance include posture, rhythm, intonation, tone quality, timbre and playing skills [6]. Posture refers to the mode of performance, performance movements and eyes of Erhu players, as well as the way in which they play Erhu with flat-legs, cross-legged, or standing [7] (fig.2 and fig.3). The player needs to adjust the performance elements according to different playing occasions to realize interaction with the audience.



Figure 2: Flat-legged Erhu Performance



Figure 3: Standing Erhu Performance

In this period, firstly, the stage forms of Erhu performance are divided into concert form, party form, and program recording form, and the characteristics of these three stages are analyzed. Secondly, relying on the interaction theory and erhu playing elements, this paper analyzes the playing skills and elements of different stage forms of the Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain.

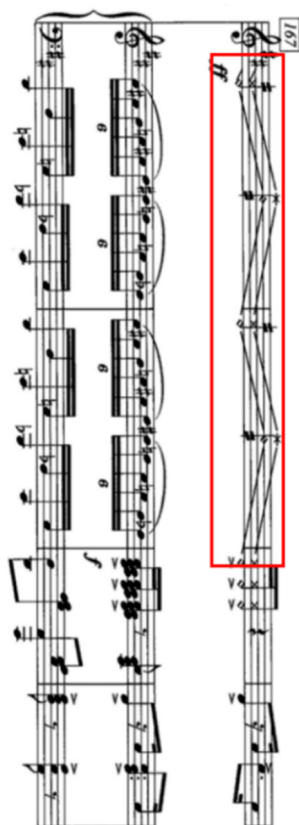
2.1 Performance of the Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain in the Form of a Solo Concert

The Erhu performance in the form of solo concerts is generally held in a concert hall, which is an academic performance occasion. According to the results of the questionnaire, the audience listening to the live Erhu performance in the concert hall are mainly people who appreciate music or have a strong interest in Erhu performance, or mainly the Erhu players. Such an audience has a professional musical quality, so they have the seriousness, stability, and artistry of Erhu's performance. These audiences not only expect Erhu players to reproduce musical works objectively and truly but also look forward to seeing breakthroughs and innovations in Erhu's performance[8]. Therefore, Erhu players should continuously add personal imagination and artistic expression to the emotional connotation of the original work, endow it with more emotional world and spiritual charm, so that the original work can have different artistic colors and show their personal style and artistic characteristics. Therefore, when playing "The Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain" in a concert hall, the Limb amplitudes should be small, it is necessary to pay attention to the treatment of timbre and rhythm. Due to the solemn occasions in the concert hall, flat-legged performance is adopted, and attention is paid to the innovation of skills. When playing the theme of snow mountain and comrade-in-arms, you can lightly close your eyes to convey a sad and tough feeling to the audience. When playing the theme of morning glow, it is necessary to be firm in eyes and appropriately increase the amplitude of limbs, to convey to the audience the belief that revolution will prevail and the heroic image of Red Army soldiers.

2.2 Performance of the Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain in the Form of Program Recording

Television programs use lens language to transmit music to the audience in the form of video [9]. The audience of TV programs is not entirely professional Erhu players. TV programs first pursue visual aesthetics. Therefore, in the recording of TV programs, players should have a sense of the lens, pay attention to appropriate expression, and focus on depicting the mutual echo between performance expression and music according to the change of lens[10]. In addition, they should also pay attention to the use of erhu simulation sound effects and relatively exaggerated body language to create entertainment, and visual aesthetics pursued by TV programs. Based on the performance stability and emotion transmission, standing

Erhu positions can be adopted when playing the journey and comrade-in-arms theme. In terms of sound effect, as shown in Notation Example 1, the bow-Skills of Erhu at the end of the snow mountain theme pulls the inner string through the bow hair, controls the bow rod to rub the outer string with your hand to make noise, and slides up and down regularly with your left hand to create double tones. This expression of tone not only amplifies the effect of noise but also reduces the harm of noise, but also shows the harsh environment of the snow mountain.



Notation Example 1. Double tone performance of snow mountain theme

2.3 Live performance of the Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain

The live performance of the evening party pays attention to the atmosphere. It is very live, direct, participatory, and interactive, which can most directly attract different audience groups so that they can make full use of their hearing and vision to feel the pleasure brought by the erhu performance. Therefore, the selection of live performance repertoire is very important. It is recommended to choose music with a loud tone, fast rhythm, short duration, and passionate emotions. The Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain can play the theme of journey or morning glow, and the overall speed and rhythm should be slightly faster. Pay attention to the treatment of intensity and emotional fluctuations. For example, there is a strong contrast between intensity fluctuations at bar 8 of the journey theme. Therefore, changes in the intensity and mood of the

music can be expressed through changes in the amplitude of the limbs. Through the change of intensity and limb amplitude, the audience's mood is guided to change, so that the performance can overawe the audience's opponent by a show of strength. In the more intense emotional bar, on the premise of ensuring stable performance, a standing style can be adopted to express the emotions and moods of the music to the climax.

In addition, the atmosphere created by the stage is an important factor to enhance interaction, but there are few literatures that combine it with the interaction of Erhu performance. Based on the creation background and emotional connotation of the Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain, attention should be paid to its stage design and scene arrangement so that the stage scene can change with the changes in timbre, rhythm, and expressed emotion during the Erhu performance. Create a "musical" in the form of instrumental music through the rendering of stage scenes and atmosphere. Therefore, the scene and atmosphere need to be combined with the narrative and emotions of erhu performance, echoing the emotional changes of the music and the inner feelings of audience. Erhu performances can also be dramatized by adding vocal harmony. In the journey period, under dim lights, accompanied by piano simulated bell sound and tragic prelude, the melody with strong Erhu singing and rhythmic sense is guided to describe the march momentum of Red Army soldiers. Therefore, the player needs firm eyes and full mood to increase some limb amplitude. With the gradual acceleration of the rhythm of Erhu, the lights become brighter. In this period, the holographic projection technology can be used to create a snow mountain scene, with large amount snow flying all over the sky. (As shown in Figure 4).



Figure 4: Scene of the Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain

In the period of the snow mountain, the players' mood changes from low to firm and then gradually turns to farewell and sadness. In the stage scene, the lighting changes with the tone, rhythm, and mood of the Erhu. Accompanied by the Erhu playing skills, it can present the dark sky and large amount of snow flying all over the sky. The scene of soldiers marching difficultly in a majestic environment and familiar scenes to the audience, such as crystal monuments. The players' eyes are drooping, sad, and determined as if they were telling a heroic and moving story of the Long March.

In the period of comrade-in-arms, the inner feelings of Red Army soldiers are depicted by Seeing off the Red Army Troops. This period expresses the thoughts of Red Army soldiers for their loved ones in their hometown, the memory of their deceased comrades-in-arms, and a close bond between the people and the military. The mood of this period is full of a sense of farewell and gratitude to ordinary people. The players can close their eyes and play as if they were recalling a moving story along the Long March. In the scene design, people can provide drinks and cook meals for the Red Army and sew clothes and shoes under dim light to arouse the resonance of audience (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Scene of the Close Bond Between the People and the Military

In the period of morning glory, the music is played passionately with triplets, introducing the theme tone of the Northern Shaanxi folk song, *Glowing Red Morningstar Lilies*, which is interspersed with brilliant variations of Erhu, indicating that dawn is coming, and the Long March is about to be won. Players can play in a standing position to increase the range of limbs. In this section, voices and harmonies can be added to heighten the stage atmosphere and express the Red Army soldiers' desire for victory in the Long March. The players' mood needs to turn thrilled, excited, and overjoyed. Their eyes should be firm and confident, with a slight sense of pride and a smile on their face, showing the joy of the impending victory in the Long March. In the scene design, the lighting needs to be bright and warm, giving people a sense of hope, which can present the scenes of the sunrise, in front of the snow mountain covered with snow, forming a spectacular sunshine gold mountain, and the victory and reunion of the Red Army.

3. Conclusion

Erhu's performance requires solid basic skills. The players are required to have long-term and scientific training to master their playing skills. However, to present an excellent stage effect, players need not only playing skills but also the desire to express and perform. Through watching the stage performance of famous players and summarizing the performance experience, it is found that Erhu players need to pay attention to the role and influence of posture, and perfectly combine posture, playing skills, and stage arrangement to create an incredible audio-visual performance with sounds, paintings, and feelings and show the artistic beauty of the music. Therefore, this paper divides the stage of Erhu's performance into concert form, evening party form, and program recording form. Based on the theory of performance interaction and according to the characteristics of different performance forms, it puts forward the playing skills required by players as an example. The research content of this paper combines the author's experience with the interpretation of the connotation of the *Indomitable Spirits of the Snow Mountain*. However, due to each player's personalized performance style and different stage experiences, there may be disputes over the experience proposed in this paper, which can promote the better development of Erhu's performance and allow the audience to experience valuable artistic performance, and an aesthetically high-standard art.

References

1. Zhao Hanyang, Three Elements of Erhu Performance Art, *Journal of Central Conservatory of Music*, 1989 (3): p. 86
2. Hu Yunxia, A Brief Analysis of the Performance Elements of Erhu Performance, *Northern Music*, 2014 (9), p. 95
3. Yinbo. Research on the Relationship between the Subject and the Object in Interactive Display. *Packaging Engineering* 04(2010) , pp. 84-86
4. Lu Jining. On the Three Levels of the Interaction between Subject and Object. *Social Sciences Journal*, No. 08, 1987, pp. 14-18
5. Stanislavsky: *The Complete Works of Stanislavsky*. Translated by Zheng Xue Lai. Beijing: China Film Press, 1979
6. Tian Guang, *Erhu Self-study Course*, Beijing: Beijing Music Publishing House, 1963.
7. Guo Hui, On the Dialectical Unity of Form and Content in Erhu Performance, Shanxi University, 2021
8. Stuart. Hall Paul Dugay. *Research on Cultural identity*, 2010
9. Liang Junjie. On the Artistic Features of TV Camera Language. *The Age of Media*, 2013. Issue 07,
10. Uta Hagen, *Haskel Frankel. Respect For Acting*. Macmillan, 1976